DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 486 HE 032 077

AUTHOR	Watters, James J.; Weeks, Patricia
TITLE	Professional Development of Part-Time or Casual Academic Staff in Universities: A Model for Empowerment.
PUB DATE	1999-04-00
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Ontario, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adjunct Faculty; Change Strategies; *Faculty Development; Focus Groups; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Part Time Faculty; Participative Decision Making; Quality of Working Life; Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS	*Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study of part-time faculty at Queensland University of Technology (Australia) which examined concerns and issues facing part-time academic staff, and led to a collaborative and dialectic process for implementing faculty-led changes. The first phase of the project involved: (1)data collection on about 800 individuals, through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and anecdotal data; (2)a daylong workshop, involving approximately 200 part-time faculty and key administrators, which focused on concerns, issues, and claims of all stakeholders and resulted in a series of recommendations and action plans; and (3)formation of action groups of part-time academic staff to work on changing the practice of part-time teaching at the institution. In a follow-up study two years later, six part-timers who had participated in the focus sessions in the first phase of the study were interviewed and 140 part-timers were surveyed. The study did not find significant improvements in the situation of part-time faculty. The paper suggests that the current situation of marginalization and dual labor forces is dominated by the market and corporate paradigms can be expected to persist unless part-timers are afforded opportunities to contribute to course development and develop their teaching skills. The study is continuing with a multi-institutional focus. (Contains 28 references.) (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 430 486

Professional Development of part-time or casual academic staff in Universities: A model for empowerment

James J Watters and Patricia Weeks
j.watters@qut.edu.au

Queensland University of Technology

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association

Montreal

April 1999

HE032077

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James J. Watters

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Professional Development of part-time or casual academic staff in Universities: A model for empowerment

James J Watters and Patricia Weeks
Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

This paper describes the main findings of a study of the situation of part-time academics employed by a large Australian university and summarises a follow-up conducted two years later to determine the extent of change. The study was undertaken as a collaborative action research program with the intent of empowering part time academic staff to take responsibility for their own professional development. The program culminated in the formation of an Association of Part Time Academics, which was able to take a leading role in providing a voice for part time staff and for delivering professional development. However, the study also identified a range of claims, concerns, and issues concerning the employment and responsibilities of part time staff, which has provided the base for proposing a national set of policies on the role of part time academic staff.

Background

The context of higher education has, as we all know, changed dramatically in recent years. Classes worldwide are larger and the student population more diverse. Public funding has been reduced accompanied by greater accountability. Increased emphasis on technology in higher education; internationalisation of the curriculum and course offerings; and increased competition for students have raised tensions for staff and administrators. The range of courses and employer expectations of graduates have also changed. The higher education system is being asked to produce a more flexible workforce to respond to changing society. Flexibility is a key word among the cloisters of universities. In response many universities are coming to rely more on part-time academic staff as a significant and growing resource (Castleman, Allen, Bastalich, & Wright, 1995; Gappa, 1984; McKenzie, 1996). In the US, Kirshstein, Matheson, Jing and Zimbler (1996) (quoted by Gappa & Leslie, 1997) estimate that 41% of all teaching staff are part-time. Given this growth in the reliance of higher education institutions on part-time academic staff and increased attention to the overall quality of teaching in higher education there is a need for the continual development of policy and practices for employing, managing and professionally developing part time and casual academic staff. However, there are many competing agendas and for some academics part time staff represent a threat.

In Australia, higher education is delivered through some 36 publicly funded Universities and a handful of small private institutions catering for in excess of 650 000 students (Coaldrake and Stedman 1998). Australian universities tend to be located in higher population centres and draw their students mostly from the local region. However, there are significant numbers of international students from Asia, Africa, Europe and the US. Major restructuring of Australian higher education occurred in the late 1980s, which attempted to reduce a two tiered higher education system to a single system. Nevertheless, the universities differ in the types of courses they offer and their long-term missions. In more recent times, these institutions have been identified in terms of their histories and missions, somewhat flippantly as the Sandstones, the Wannabees and the U-Techs. The Sandstones represent the historically significant and traditional universities mostly Capital City based and are acknowledged as leading institutions in research and post graduate teaching. Wanabees tend to be newer capital city universities or provincial institutions and attract younger dynamic staff with a strong orientation towards research. The U-Techs represent institutions that were

Institutes of Technology or Colleges of Advanced Education with a strong leaning towards professional education.

Among these U-Techs, a union of the larger institutions has emerged over recent years – the Australian Technology Network (ATN). The ATN includes: the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), the University of South Australia (UniSA), the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), and Curtin University of Technology. Cumulatively they enrol approximately 20% of Australian university students. The ATN shares a heritage of working with industry and the professions, and relies heavily on casual and part time academic staff to deliver their courses. For example, at QUT, part-time academics out number full-time academics 2:1, undertake 25% of all teaching and in most instances are employed recurrently. In the ATN most casual and part time staff are employed because of their industrial, professional or business expertise and have had little experience of teaching in higher education. Other part-time staff of course include graduate students who have different motivations and skills but whose role in teaching is seen as important by administrators for their own professional development as potential academics. The quality of learning within the ATN universities is more likely to be affected by the quality of teaching by casual and part time academic staff. If university courses are to maintain a balance between theory and praxis, the professional skills, contemporary experiences, and "real-world" focus of casual and part time academic staff needs to be identified and applied. Furthermore, the professional experience of casual and part time academic staff also needs to inform curriculum development to ensure its practical relevance.

This presentation describes a project implemented in one of the ATN universities. The study addresses an issue particularly significant to the ATN network of universities. The study was conceptualised as a collaborative participatory action research project that commenced in October 1994. The purpose of this study was to support the implementation of professional development opportunities for part-time academics and to explore the managerial and situational issues that impact on the effectiveness of professional development. To achieve this, the study focussed on four major objectives:

1. reconnaissance of the contemporary situation with respect to concerns and issues facing part-time academic staff at the Queensland University of Technology;
2. development of a collaborative and dialectic process through which claims, issues and concerns could be reconciled and form the base for action;
3. facilitation of the empowerment of part-timers to develop their voice and role in the University culture; and
4. evaluation of longer term changes.

Theoretical perspectives

Until recently four categories of academic staff existed in Australian universities: full time or tenured staff, fixed contract staff, part time or sessional staff and casual staff. Recent industrial action has culminated in higher education employment award that has severely reduced the use of fixed contracts. Full time staff are now subject to performance review and contract staff can only be appointed to positions that have limited duration, for example replacing a tenured staff member on extended leave. Part time, sessional and casual staff include those who are paid for fixed numbers of hours for a semester and hence work as tutors in a variety of courses, instructors providing lectures, demonstrators in science, clinical supervisors in nursing or practice teaching supervisors in teacher education. Casual staff are employed for one off lectures or to fill in during emergencies.

The conditions of employment of part-time academics in universities are a long-standing issue exacerbated by the increasing move of higher education towards a mass market. Rajagopal and Farr (1989) have argued that the financial crises that North American Universities faced in the 1970s contributed to the greater dependence on part-time academic staff. In their analysis of the marginalisation of part-timers in Canadian universities, Rajagopal and Farr (1989) drew upon four models to describe the relationships between universities and their part-time academics: Market Model, Corporate Model, Professional Development Model and a Political Economy Model.

From a Market Model perspective the expendable nature of part-timers reflects an oversupply in the market place. The growth of part-time academic personnel is an indicator of the stress universities are facing in difficult economic times to maintain the privileged and protected full-time academic positions. Confronted with fiscal restraint, administrators look to the employment of part-time staff a practice that may be supported by many full-time staff. Being cheaper, employment of part-timers enables full-timers to maintain higher salaries. However, there is a counter opinion presented by unions that suggests part-time work in general threatens the working conditions of full-time workers (Weeks, 1987).

From a Corporate Model perspective, the changing and uncertain demand for graduates by industry means that long-term employment of staff in some areas is risky. The complexity surrounding the role of higher education was highlighted in the Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy (West, 1997). Most submissions from employers were multifaceted. Some professions saw the role of higher education as a source of professional graduates with a combination of specialist, technical and broad generic attributes, while other sources argued for a rounded, adaptable graduate. That is, industry is looking beyond just technical skills to more generic skills needed to become life long learners responsive to a complex society. Sustainable universities will be those that examine their focus and missions in light of the challenges created by changing conditions and respond in ways that clearly demonstrate that they provide value to our society. A capacity to respond needs a flexible workforce and hence universities can employ part-timers who provide this flexible workforce to teach in disciplines whose graduates are temporarily in high demand. These staff are expendable when the demand drops.

A Professional Development Model suggests that many part-timers teach in universities for personal professional enrichment and intellectual satisfaction. Part-time teaching, for some, is the phase of enculturation into university teaching. For others, it represents an opportunity to share their professional knowledge with neophyte members of their profession. Hence, policies that support integration and capitalise on part-timers experience or expertise can be beneficial to both the university and industry. However, in most institutions, although part-timers contribute substantially to the teaching load, the expenditure of resources to support them is trivial (Rajagpal & Farr, 1989).

From the perspective of a Political Economy Model, the way resources are allocated results in a stratification of power with part-time staff subordinate. In the organisation and processes of work the established powerful factions – government, full-time staff, and administration – engage in discourse with the exclusion and marginalisation of the weaker groups such as part timers and contract staff. At the micro analytical level, academic power lies with full-time staff who are critically involved in the day-to-day management of part-timers including staffing, support for professional development, evaluation of their work and establishing an appropriate ethical discourse. Part-timers are a consumable and low-cost academic workforce with employment prospects governed by short term economic considerations (Rajagpal & Farr, 1992).

From another perspective, Gappa and Leslie (1997) have argued that the use of part-time faculty has created two tiers in the academic professions with dramatically different

conditions of employment with the characteristics of a dual labour market. Under these circumstances staff in the primary labour market have relatively good working conditions and opportunities for advancement whilst those in the secondary market have little opportunity for advancement, experience instability and high turnover and are subject to "capricious and arbitrary treatment" (Montagna, 1977, p. 67-68). Given this situation, part-time staff are nevertheless professionally well qualified, motivated and potentially capable of providing quality teaching experiences. Their rewards for engaging in part-time teaching usually relate to the intrinsic aspects of academic life including the opportunity to teach new generations of their profession. Gappa and Leslie (1997, p. 8) argue that the teaching workforce needs to be reconceptualised as "one faculty", not as a two tiered full-time and part-time academic staff.

These conceptualisations of the role of part time academic staff provide a framework for understanding the management priorities and professional development needs of these staff. Cheap labour or an integral part of the teaching faculty represents mind-sets that need to be challenged. An essential part of this study was exploring the dimensions of the mind-sets entrenched at QUT. We were also concerned with the extent to which these staff availed themselves of the opportunities for professional development and circumstances that might inhibit or facilitate professional development.

Context

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT), by Australian standards, is a large multi-campus university with almost 30 000 students including postgraduate masters and doctoral students. It has eight faculties teaching across law, engineering, health sciences, arts and social sciences, information technology, education, business, and science. Teaching is conducted across three campuses within the metropolitan area.

QUT has recognised that part-time academics make a substantial contribution to teaching and learning, and are therefore, instrumental in moving the University towards achieving its mission and goals. It employs part-time academics on a casual basis as lecturers, tutors, demonstrators, clinical facilitators, and field placement supervisors. QUT prides itself on being a "University for the Real World" by using strategies that ensure the relevance, currency and comprehensiveness of its courses by "connecting directly with the world of practice" (QUT, 1994). In fulfilling its mission, QUT appears to acknowledge the value that part-time academic staff bring to the institution. Thus QUT in advertising for part-time academic staff actively seeks professionals who enhance the practical and professional perspective of QUT's education. This depth of reliance highlights the pressing need for universities to set in place professional development and managerial frameworks that take account of the 'special' demands placed on them when they employ large numbers of part-time teachers (Cummings, 1987; Mingle, 1981; Ostertag, 1991; Twigg, 1989; Spangler, 1990; Pollington, 1991). These frameworks must also include practices that recognise the strength that part time academic staff bring to the university from their professions.

Methods and Data Sources

We wanted to know more about part-time staff from as many perspectives as possible in order to mobilise, unify and empower the part-timers to take responsibility for their professional development. We also needed to identify the constraints and processes endemic in the institution that impacted on the professional lives of part-timers and the quality of their teaching. Action research allowed us to get close to our participants — the part-timers, the administrators and full-time staff (Kember & Gow, 1992; Wadsworth, 1991). Participatory action research has dimensions of knowledge production and action, as well as constituting new ways of relating to one another to make the work of reform possible. This project has produced knowledge about part-time teachers at QUT, which was previously unknown by the institution and part-timers themselves.

The action phase of the project empowered part-timers to be involved in changing aspects of the culture and practices of part-time teaching at QUT. Action research integrates evaluation, research and philosophical reflection, into a unified conception of a reflective educational practice. Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediately problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (Rappaport, 1970). Through an emphasis on critical evaluation of practice action research capitalises on the shared concern of practitioners from a variety of backgrounds who are committed to improving practice and understanding the process of practice (Whitehead, 1988). The strength of action research as indicated by Whitehead lies in the creative and critical dialogue that develops between members of a community of practice. Each of the researchers came to the project with different perspectives but sharing a common concern about practice. Action research has allowed us to integrate the variety and diversity of the experiences we brought to the project.

The project was implemented broadly in three phases. The first phase of the project was a situational analysis. This process involved data collection through survey, focus groups, interviews with various stakeholders, and collecting assorted anecdotal data. Some 800 individuals were involved. However, each stage informed and complemented others. The procedures adopted were congruent with those described by Guba and Lincoln as *responsive evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1993). This phase provided data that informed us of the demography, distribution, qualifications, motivations of part-timers and the constraints and issues that influenced their engagement in professional development.

Phase two involved sharing claims concerns and issues, and was undertaken as a daylong workshop involving some 200 part-timers and key administrators. The outcomes of phase one were shared among participants before facilitated groups addressed specific issues. The workshop allowed for a process of enlightenment of the concerns, issues and claims of the various stakeholders and to begin a process of reconciliation. This phase was designed to produce a series of recommendations, action plans and initiatives for further exploration.

The third phase involved the formation of action groups of part-time academic staff to become engaged in the process of changing the practice of part-time teaching at QUT.

Results

This study presents a story that describes a process of change and empowerment. The findings were extensive and present many implications for administrators, management policy, full-time academics, students and the professional development of part-time teaching staff. Some preliminary demographic findings have been published (Arcodia, Christensen, Kemmis, Ryan, Watters, & Weeks, 1995) and a detailed report was prepared (Watters, Christensen, Ryan, Weeks, & Arcodia, 1996 and an overview of the process has been published (Watters, Christensen, Arcodia, Ryan, & Weeks, 1998). An overriding impression gained from the study was that part-time academics are highly motivated despite evidence that their relationships with the administration and encouragement to identify with the University are not perceived as a high priority by their supervisors. There appeared to be situations that are quite extraordinary in terms of the number of hours of employment and associated work loads. There also appears to be evidence that a significant proportion of part-time staff are dependent on the University as their sole source of personal income. Many part-timers are motivated by a desire to improve their profession and to mentor new members of their profession. On the other hand, it would seem that there are large numbers of professionals who are engaged in part-time teaching as a way of enhancing their professional standing.

Selection and training

From the perspective of the senior management within schools – Heads of School and Course Co-ordinators – selection of part-time academic staff was seen as a necessity to cope with

extra classes and replace full-time staff. Part-timers were seen as a flexible workforce allowing staffing processes to cope with fluctuating student numbers. The senior academics in general were also less concerned with accreditation of teaching of part-timers than they were with professional qualifications in the selection process.

> *We are looking for a number of things, certainly their qualifications is the one thing I look at and in particular whether they've got an Honours Degree and many of our part time staff come from this faculty or the UQ* [University of Queensland] *faculty. I look at their Honours qualifications, I look to see if they've got some demonstrated expertise in the particular subject that I might be wanting to put them into. ... I could find a number of people who have teaching qualifications, it's not the norm or a major consideration ... but there are people there with teacher qualifications and I would take that into account.*

There was a common concern that professional credibility be maintained in the University's courses. For example, one senior academic stated:

> *... even if you have a professional background, the minute you work in an institution you're seen as an academic and no longer have any credibility, well that's an exaggeration, but have less credibility than in the professional world, so in a sense we maintain that professional approach by bringing in industry people who are up to date with what's happening.*

Whilst acknowledging their expertise and professionalism, administrators gave part-timers little chance of input into planning of units and in some areas such involvement was discouraged.

Management: resources and administration

Many of the senior academics were unaware of the day-to-day administration and involvement of part-timers. Some were unsure of how many were employed or who they were. Few schools provide any form of common induction program and only six schools could provide any specific documentation aimed at new part-time staff. In contrast one Faculty had developed a manual which was subsequently used as a model for other faculties to consider. The availability of part-timers was a concern to a few managers who lamented large class sizes and the need to be able to access part-timers to teach in these units at short notice.

Concerns of part-timers

Part timers identified a range of claims, concerns and issues. In an organisation as complex as QUT many issues were clearly idiosyncratic to time, place and circumstances. Many had to do with bureaucracy concerning pay, computer access and infrastructure support. However, some of the most prevalent concerns related to a sense of isolation and marginalisation:

> *(I) work 12 hours a week (2 days) but don't feel part of things. (I) Feel isolated, no mechanisms for contact with other part-timers, could be helpful in sharing understanding of students' needs.*

> *I don't have much contact, I feel very much insulated ... I don't feel very much part of the faculty, I'm just an outsider who comes in and helps out, sort of, to fill a gap ... I turn up on Monday afternoons at 5 o'clock, go to my little drawer, see if there's anything there, notices there for me, and then take off for the lecture ... so I'm very much a fly-by-night.*

I receive very little indication that the School is interested or even aware of what I do with my classes and I feel on the edge and insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

I have never met the Head of School or been introduced to anyone.

Experiences are captured by one comment that highlights the "invisibility" of part-timers :

I used to use the staff room near my class in "x" block for printing and tea/coffee making. The full-time staff were suspicious of me and once even asked me to show my ID... a proper copying, computing, printing and tea/coffee making room is needed for part-time staff.

Teaching support and resources

Support for teaching varies widely across Schools. Some Schools provide access and support for part-timers in respect of preparation of materials for teaching, space to work in and even encourage part-timers to attend staff meetings. In most cases however, there is little recognition of either the physical or motivational needs of the part-timers. As one part-timer reported:

There is a real culture problem with academics being, or seeing themselves on a much higher plane than all the non-academic tutoring or part-time teaching staff

Summary

These data lead to some broad generalisations that serve as discussion points and a base to initiate action. The commonalties and responses have been summarised under claims, concerns and issues in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. In keeping with the process of responsive evaluation the *claims*, *concerns* and *issues* raised by the stakeholders in the system under evaluation represent a set of assertions that may be favourable, critical or controversial respectively. The major task in evaluation then becomes one of seeking different views and engaging in mutual reconciliation of these view points. Thus, individual part-time staff were selected and challenged with the range of claims, concerns and issues in order to explore the realia at a personal level.

Table 1

Claims regarding motivation to teach

Claims
Enjoyment of teaching
Returning something to the profession
Enhancing professional status or self esteem in one's own profession

Table 2

Concerns identified by part-time academic staff through focus groups

Concerns	Examples
Physical facilities	Locked rooms, no phone, poor meeting space, lack of technical support at night, need to do photocopying privately
Induction information insufficient	No duty statement, no policies re assessment
Pay rates and policies	Variable, unrealistic marking, co-ordination not allowed for, unpaid course development, unpaid consultation times
Administration of pay and conditions	Number of forms, tax deductions, enormous delays
Marking and teaching guidelines vague	Liaison poor within teams, little consultation
Course organisation	Lack of adequate notice, never met course co-ordinator
Quality of teaching	Class sizes, no consideration of teaching ability in selection, lack of commitment by colleagues, teaching seen as a reward for undertaking PG studies, insufficient training
Support for teaching	No sense of being valued, need to know content, no consultation about unit development or feedback, not advised of student results

Table 3

Issues raised by part-time academic staff during focus sessions

Issues	Elaboration
Powerlessness	Feelings of not being able to protest, be critical, have a voice
Co-ordinators	Senior staff member should be responsible for co-ordination of part-timers
Relevance	Real-world practical skill *vs* theoretical and knowledge frameworks of full timers, part-timers should be involve in unit development
Professional Development	Teacher-training necessary

Initiatives and Outcomes

The project culminated in the formation of an Professional Association of Part Time Academics (PAPTA) at QUT. PAPTA has continued to function with university support and provides a forum for expressing the concerns and identifying the professional needs of part-time teaching staff as well as a focus for professional development activities (Smiles, 1997). The association has been active and enthusiastically agitates for the professional needs of its members.

We revisited a number of part-timers that had participated in earlier interviews or focus groups and attended meetings of the professional association (PAPTA). Those who had become mobilised through involvement in PAPTA remained optimistic although tempered with a degree of cynicism. The Association had developed a presence and through a core

committed group was able to negotiate directly with the senior management. The major initiative of the association was the continuation of the Annual Conference initiated during the final stages of the initial study. Support for this was provided through a direct grant and administrative support through the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TALDU) – formerly the Academic Staff Development Unit (ASDU) – to facilitate the organisation of the conference. The initial objectives of PAPTA addressed four issues: communication, culture, structure and professional development. Communication problems were noted as a considerable impediment to effective collaboration among staff. A range of strategies was envisaged that would increase awareness by administration and advocacy of part-time staff through strategic support such as an academic mentor to support part-time staff in each school. Finally initiatives that support the professional development of part-time staff both in teaching and administration were pursued.

Change

The Deputy Vice Chancellor supported recommendations from the conference and initiated some improvements. These concerned streamlining pay claim procedures, access to e-mail and library facilities. Implicit in this commitment is Chancellery support for ongoing consultation and an annual conference. The value that the administration attributed to part-timers was also highlighted through the inclusion in the University's Teaching and Learning plan that *QUT will continuously improve its teaching environment to optimise students' learning experiences* to be achieved among other strategies by improvement of *academic support provision for part-time staff*. Senior management appeared to adopt a Professional Development paradigm (Rajagopal & Farr, 1989), acknowledging the important roles played by part-timers (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998):

> ... Universities do not seem to appreciate in a strategic way the role and contribution which is being made by contract and casual staff. Not only do these people bear a pivotal role in maintaining institutional reputation by their contributions to undergraduate teaching, they are mostly young and well qualified, and include many women. (pp. 157-158)

The notion of personal and professional development in symbiotic relationship with the university provides a just framework and vision to support the integration of part-timers into an academic community. However, at middle management level there is a continued sense of political economic forces at work.

Change is a complex process involving the development of new mindsets (Fullan, 1993). Priorities of middle management, beliefs of entrenched full-time academics and a level of apathy towards part-timers by all impede change. The invisible faculty, as Gappa and Leslie (1993) have described them, remain disempowered at the school and faculty level. Change is constant in much of higher education where individual academics have themselves little control over their contexts. Maintaining the *status quo* is an attractive proposition for many. If change is to be initiated at the school or departmental level, every part-timer needs to be recognised and valued by his or her teaching colleagues. Heads of school have an obligation to facilitate change through vision building, inquiry and the development of a culture of collaboration. Leadership for change starts with individual academics and requires a reappraisal of the culture of teaching. Practical strategies including acknowledgment of part-timers by the provision of appropriate infrastructure support – desk, computer, telephone – would be a positive start. Some schools have gone further and established collaborative professional development projects to enhance tutoring skills. Much remains to be done in other areas where School Administrators have the opportunity to encourage and support part-timers professional development through existing programmes but do not. Support for teaching and learning requires a new mindset that values professional expertise, motivation and is willing to support teaching development.

Problems revisited.

In a follow-up to the study some two years later we interviewed six part-timers who were participants in focus sessions in the previous study. We also were able to access survey data compiled by the PAPTA Association through an open-ended set of questions. One hundred and forty part-timers responded to this survey. In the interview, explicit information was sought concerning the role of part-timers two years on. In particular, we explored their sense of marginalisation or inclusion in the mainstream life of schools, the part they played in curriculum development, security of employment and contemporary problems. Whilst most acknowledged that they had much to contribute to the curriculum they were never asked to be involved in this process and indeed felt that they were "still invisible". The questionnaire data revealed similar concerns and identified others. Three issues again emerged as dominant issues: lack of adequate facilities, being valued and continuity of employment. The part-timers continued to identify poor teaching facilities, locked rooms, poor access to computers, e-mail, parking and the like impacted on their capacity to effectively teach their classes. However, many others described the facilities as very good: "Excellent lecture theatre facilities with slides, videos and computer."

A sense of marginalisation and isolation was still prevalent and captured by the comments by one part –time staff member:

> *Part timers aren't always valued – some have the perception that if you are not full-time you are not fully committed and you are simply just a "fill in" for the "real experts" ... Existence is fragile - there is very limited sense of security.*

The sense of security, knowing that they will be employed the following semester was a concern for many:

> *Being provided work in the previous semester, but was told my name didn't come out of the hat this semester. Feelings of not being appreciated for all the work you put in and being taken for granted.*

Summary

Part-time academics represent a growing body of staff with a strong commitment to their disciplines and a desire to bring to the future members of their profession the benefits of their experience. They are mostly highly qualified or experienced professionals who are emersed in the contemporary practices of their profession. They often are more attuned to the industrial and workplace situation and the needs of potential employers than most full-time academics. Others are commencing on their professional career as research students and have the potential of identifying closely with the experiences and needs of students in whose places they were themselves not long before. Students value the professional experience and credibility of part-timers. However, this study would suggest that much remains to be done to recognise the role played by part-timers and to help them to improve their ability to contribute to the University. Over the duration of this project, there has been a heightened awareness of the role of part timers among those administrators with a concern for quality of teaching. Some faculties have deliberately developed professional development strategies, while others have appointed liaison persons to manage part time academic staff. At course co-ordinator level much remains to be done as the mind set predominating there is the market model.

As Gappa and Leslie (1996) discovered in their extensive study, the extent to which part-timers feel integrated into the university community depends on the culture of the school in which they work. However, the acceptance of part-timers into a community of learners is a priority if the viability of these institutions is to be maintained (Gappa & Leslie, 1997.)

> We are concerned that the existence of two very different employment systems may become a fundamental economic underpinning for preservation of the traditional tenure system. But we are more concerned that the bifurcation of the faculty work force may

> affect educational quality ... an open dialogue is needed on how to re-establish a community of interest among all faculty in building high-quality programs. ... threats to quality are naturally threats to the security and freedom of tenured faculty as well as part-time faculty. Everyone will be held accountable if the system does not perform at a level the public can value and support. (p. 21)

None of the part-timers reinterviewed in this study could say that there was a dramatic improvement in their situation. Pay procedures had changed but the inefficiency of the old system was replaced by a complex new system that simply shifted the burden of work and responsibility for delays from central finance to the school administrators. Involvement in course planning remains minimal. Power structures and cultures have not changed, and despite the part-timers working closely with students in the teaching situation, they are rarely called upon for feedback on the implementation of the units.

There are sound educational reasons why part-timers should be employed that are more important than fiscal reasons. However, unless part-timers are afforded opportunities to contribute to the development of courses as well as teach in them, and to develop teaching skills themselves the current situation of marginalisation and dual labour forces dominated by the market and corporate paradigms will persist.

Notwithstanding the various concerns and inequities that emerged during this study, the overarching success was the emergence of a collaborative liaison between the professional development unit at the university (TALDU) and part time academic staff. The formation of PAPTA, the heightened awareness of problems of part time academic staff, and the incorporation within the University's Teaching and Learning plan of goals for the professional development of these staff were considerable advances. As a framework or model of empowerment, participatory action research was an effective strategy.

This study continues with a multi-institutional focus. Parallel and complimentary studies in the ATN group of universities have provided a base for developing an Australia wide strategy for management of part time academic staff. A cross-institutional team is exploring instances of best practices in each institution. In our studies we did find situations where part timers were provided with effective professional development and were involved in curriculum development. These situations will be documented and disseminated along with policy statements developed collaboratively by senior management.

Sustained change is problematic and requires both action and support from senior management and empowering of the professional workforce to maintain pressure on the system to modify. This project in adopting a collaborative action research approach has plotted a path that is slowly impacting on policy and practices at middle management level. As the project continues to develop in collaboration with the part-timers association (PAPTA) and with the ATN network a bottom up, top down model is developing. The outcome, despite the constraints of funding and increased tensions in a changing university, looks promising.

References

Arcodia, C., Christensen., C., Kemmis, S., Ryan, Y., Watters, J. J.,& Weeks P. (1995). Part-time teaching staff: The invisible force. *Research and Development in Higher Education, 18,* 91-96.

Castleman, T., Allen, M., Bastalich, W., & Wright, P. (1995). *Limited access: Women's disadvantage in higher education employment* (pp. 80-81). South Melbourne: NTEU.

Coaldrake, P., & Stedman, L. (1998). *On the brink: Australia's universities confronting their future.* Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.

Cummings, K. (1987). *Part-time teachers in tertiary Visual Arts education.* A report prepared for and published by the Artworkers Union and the National Association for the Visual Arts, Sydney: National Association for the Visual Arts.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform.* London: Falmer Press.

Gappa, J. M. (1984). Part-time faculty: Higher education at a crossroads. *ASHE-ERIC: Higher Education Report No. 3.* Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Gappa, J., & Leslie, D. (1993). *The Invisible faculty: Improving the status of part-timers in higher education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gappa, J. M., & Leslie, D. W., (1997). Two faculties or one? The conundrum of part-timers in a bifurcated work force. In unedited working paper series *New Pathways: Faculty careers and employment for the 21st Century*, Inquiry #6. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1993). *Fourth generation evaluation.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Kember, D., & Gow, L. (1992). Action research as a form of staff development in higher education. *Higher Education, 23*(3), 297-310.

Kirshstein, R. J., Matheson, N., Jing, Z., & Zimbler, L. J. (1996). *Institutional policies and practices regarding faculty in higher education.* NCES 97-080. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

McKenzie, J. (1996). Developing part-timer teachers' teaching. *Research and Development in Higher Education,* 19, 532-536.

Mingle, J. (1981). *Challenges of retrenchment: Strategies for consolidating programs, cutting costs and relocating resources.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Montagna, P. (1977). Theories of labor market stratification. In *Occupations and society: Toward a sociology of the labor market.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ostertag, V. (1991). *Part-time faculty staff development model for the nineties.* Paper presented at the Conference "Enhancing the quality of teaching in colleges and universities", Charleston, SC.

Pollington, M. (1991). *Part-time teachers or teachers who teach part-time?* A paper presented at the Conference on College Communications and Composition, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education.

Rajagopal, I., & Farr, W. D. (1989). The political economy of part-time academic work in Canada. *Higher Education, 18,* 267-285.

Rajagopal, I., & Farr, W. D. (1992). Hidden academics: the part-time faculty in Canada. *Higher Education, 24*(3), 317-331.

Rappaport, R. N. (1970). *Three dilemas in action research.* Memo given to the Social Science Research Council Conference, York. (Quoted by J. Elliott & C. Adelman in Classroom action research. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Institute of Education.)

Smiles, L, (1997). *Invisible force Report.* Unpublished report on the 1997 PAPTA conference QUT, Brisbane.

Spangler, M. (1990). *Part-time faculty: Recognizing an unprotected minority.* Washington: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education.

Twigg, H. (1989). *Uses and abuses of adjunct faculty in higher education. A paper presented at the National Conference of the Community College Humanities Association.* Washington: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education.

Wadsworth, Y. (1991). *Do it yourself social research.* Collingwood, Victoria: Victorian Council of Social Service and the Melbourne Family Care Organisation.

Watters, J. J., Christensen, C., Arcodia, C., Ryan, Y., & Weeks, P. (1998). Occasional visits to the Kingdom: Part-time university teaching. In B. Atweh, S. Kemmis & P.Weeks, (Eds.), *Action research in practice: Partnerships for social justice.* (pp. 250-287). London: Routledge.

Watters, J., Christensen, C., Ryan, Y., Weeks, P., & Arcodia, C. (1996). *Petpar project report: Part-time teachers improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning through participatory action research.* QUT, Brisbane: Unpublished.

Weeks, W. (1987). Part time work: Paradox in a shrinking labour market. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 22(3), 516-529.

West, R. (Chair) (1997). *Review of higher education financing and policy: A policy discussion paper.* Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affair.

Whitehead, J. (1988). Foreword in McNiff, J. (1988). *Action research: Principles and practice* (p. xi). Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Education Ltd.